



January 2012

Alumni Spotlight

NYJT's own MJ Rodriguez was recently named as the winner of the 2011 Clive Barnes Award, celebrating the work of young actors and dancers. The award was presented December 5 at the Walter Reade Theatre at Lincoln Center. MJ is currently starring as Angel in the Off-Broadway production of *Rent*.

MJ, age 20, is a graduate of Arts High School in Newark. He starred as Angel in NJYT's production of *Rent* and is also an eight-year veteran of NJPAC's Summer Youth Performance Workshop. He has performed in shows such as *Dreamgirls*, *The Pajama Game*, *Once on This Island*, and has performed for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Camp Broadway and for the Boston Celtics Gala.

MJ attends Berklee College of Music and received both a Star-Ledger scholarship and the Young Arts first level scholarship in 2009.

"NJYT is a wonderful program for young, talented, and gifted people who want to learn, and pursue their career in theater. It was such a great environment to be in because I was surrounded by people who had the same goals and aspirations. Cynthia Meryl was our director and also our mentor. She helped us understand the world of Musical Theater and that, should it be our career path, it would not be simple. She taught us how to audition, and made sure we were taking care of our bodies, all while directing an enormous production. I had a tremendous amount of fun being a part of this program, and would encourage others to get involved as well."



Save the Date!

- Comedy Night: Feb 16
- School Cabaret: Apr 28
- NJYT Art Show: May 10
- Auditions: Mar 31, Apr 14
- Summer Show: Jul 18-22; 26-29



Happy New Year!

New Jersey Youth Theatre has an exciting year planned for 2012! Read on for information about an exciting new fundraiser, the announcement of our summer show and a special alumni profile.

Sincerely,

New Jersey Youth Theatre

NJYT to Host Comedy Night Fundraiser!



Want a fun-filled evening that will also support a cause you care about? Look no further! On Thursday evening, February 16th, NJYT will host its first-ever Comedy Night fundraiser!

"By supporting Comedy Night, patrons will be contributing to the well-being and longevity of NJYT," states Cynthia Meryl, co-founder of the school, "helping to sustain the NJYT Performing Arts School and the free summer production program in association with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center."

Comedy Night will take place at The Crossroads in Garwood, New Jersey (78 North Avenue) and will feature the talents of the Gilda's Club Laugh-Off Award winner Robin Fox, Crisis Comedy Contest winner Kim Jonny and improvisational comedian and actor Aaron Eisenberg. All the comedians hail from New Jersey and have performed extensively in clubs in the tri-state area and around the country. They all boast numerous credits from television, radio, film and the internet.

Doors open at 7:00 p.m., with the performance beginning at 8:00 pm. Tickets cost \$40.00 and will be available at the door. Food and beverages can be purchased separately throughout the evening. Hope to see you there!

NJYT Summer Show Announced!

NJYT is pleased to announce its 2012 summer show - **Smokey Joe's Café!**

Leiber and Stoller, as much as anyone, virtually invented rock 'n' roll, and now their songs provide the basis for an electrifying entertainment that illuminates a golden age of American culture. In an idealized '50's setting, the classic themes of love won, lost and imagined blend with hilarious set-pieces and slice-of-life emotions. Featuring nearly 40 of the greatest songs ever recorded, Smokey Joe's Café isn't just great pop music - it's compelling musical theatre.



Audition Information

Open Calls: Saturday, March 31 11:00 am - 4:00 pm at the Lackland Performing Arts Center

- NJPAC: Saturday, April 14
1. Dancers: 9:00 - 11:00 am
 2. Singers: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm
 3. Dance Callbacks: 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Performances will be held at NJPAC from Wednesday, July 18 through Sunday, July 22, 2012. NJYT is also excited to announce its new partnership with the Lackland Performing Arts Center and will be performing *Smokey Joe's Café* there from Thursday, July 26 through Sunday, July 29, 2012. Mark your calendars now!

Stay tuned for more show information!

Please visit us at...

www.njyouththeatre.org

or call us at

(908) 233.3200